

in the mines because they gave advance warnings. They were told if a Federal mine inspector comes onto the property, you must give advance warning to the people in the mine so they can divert the mine inspector away from the problems in the mine, take up their time while we can fix them, or he'll run out of time to inspect the mine. There's regulations against that. There's laws against. They avoided those.

Then they kept two sets of books so that the mine regulators couldn't see the real level of violations in the mines. That's what it looks like when you don't have regulations. That's what it looks like when you don't have enforcement.

And it's the conclusion of the mine safety report that mirrors one that was done by the State government. The conclusion is that the tragic death of 29 miners and serious injuries of two others in the Upper Big Branch mine were entirely preventable—entirely preventable—had regulations been enforced in that mine, had this company not been allowed to go rogue and ignore the regulations that are there to protect the miners' lives.

We must now understand what that means to the American public, what it means to these families.

What could have been contained, what could have been contained as a mine or a coal dust explosion or a localized methane gas explosion became an explosion that traveled 2,000 feet per second—2,000 feet per second. There is no miner that could get out of the way of that act.

And what happens at the end of that world without regulation, where you don't have to put up with paying fines, where you can clog the courts with appeals? When the Massey Company was sold, the board of directors that allowed this to happen, the executive officers that directed this to happen, the officers walked away with \$90 million in bonuses; the board of directors walked away with \$19 million in bonuses. And Don Blankenship, the CEO of the company that wrote the memo that said it's production of coal or get out, it's not safety, walked away with \$86 million.

And now get this: Don Blankenship, the CEO, now wants to go back into the coal business after killing 29 miners. And whether it's the State of Virginia or the State of West Virginia or Kentucky or anywhere else, the suggestion is that they might be able to give him a permit to open up a mine. Twenty-nine miners are dead, violations of law, a criminal corporate culture, and somebody else says that they might be able to go back into the mines.

You will not reignite the American Dream for workers in this country if you take away their rights at work. You will not reignite the American Dream for the middle class if they have no rights at work, if they're subjected to this. For these families who lost the 29 members of their families, they're

crushed. They're crushed. But you can't do that by eliminating the regulations. It's the regulations in place that have saved miners' lives; but it's the avoidance of the regulations, the ignoring of the regulations, and it's the failure of this Congress to introduce tough sanctions.

When you obstruct a Federal safety investigation, it should be a felony. Somebody should go to jail. When you obstruct the right of a worker to blow the whistle on an unsafe procedure, there's got to be a strict fine for that. That's how we reignite the American Dream.

We've got a lot of work to do in this Congress, but you can't do it by stopping all regulations that protect our families, that protect our communities, that protect the workers in America today.

PEARL HARBOR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the sun was lazily rising on the horizon. It was around breakfast time on a stunning Sunday morning. It was quiet, peaceful, calm. People felt secure. There was a small tropical breeze as the American flag was being raised on a nearby flagpole.

It was this day that Luke Trahin, a 22-year-old sailor from southeast Texas, noticed large formations of aircraft darkening the glistening sky. He kept watching in awe until suddenly the aircraft broke formation, dove from the sky, and unleashed a fury of deadly, devastating bombs and torpedoes on a place called Pearl Harbor in the Pacific. It was this day, 70 years ago this morning, when Luke Trahin and his fellow sailors, soldiers, and marines saw war unleashed upon America. It was December 7, 1941.

The Japanese had caught America by surprise and took advantage of an unprepared nation. And after the smoke cleared on that morning of madness, 98 Navy planes and 64 Army aircraft were destroyed. Luke's unit, Patrol Wing One, lost all but three of its 36 aircraft. 2,471 Americans, servicemen, and civilians, were killed by this unwarranted invasion of terror from the skies.

The pride of the United States Navy, the battleships—West Virginia, California, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Maryland, Nevada, and Arizona—were trapped in the harbor. They made easy targets for the Japanese pilots. The sailors onboard these battle wagons fought with the courage of an entire legion of warriors when they were attacked by a skillful, fanatical, and tyrannical enemy. All of these fierce U.S. Navy battleships were sunk or damaged. Their guns, Mr. Speaker, are now silent.

The hull of the USS Arizona became the sacred graveyard in the peaceful Pacific for more than 1,177 American sailors and marines. I have seen, Mr.

Speaker, the oil that still seeps to the surface from the hull of the battleship Arizona.

Luke Trahin and his Navy buddies in Patrol Wing One quickly got organized, prepared, and waited for 2 days for the expected land invasion by the Japanese. It never came. But America was at war. It was World War II, and the war was long. It spread from the Pacific to Europe to Africa to the Middle East to Asia. The Japanese, then the Nazis, seemed undefeatable. But even the Japanese were concerned about the spirit of America. The Japanese commander of the Pearl Harbor invasion remarked that what Japan had done was wake a sleeping giant.

World War II was hard. Millions served in uniform overseas; millions served on the home front; all sacrificed for the cause of America. The Nation woke from a somber sleep of neutrality and, with our allies, defeated the tyrants that would rule over the world. That was a time when Americans put aside all differences and united to defend freedom in our Nation. When the war was won, over 400,000 Americans had given their lives for this nation.

Mr. Speaker, I'm always intrigued by the stories of those war heroes and the folks of that generation. There isn't one of them that cannot recall the exact moment and place they were when they heard the news of Pearl Harbor. Both of my parents, barely teenagers at the time, still talk about what they were doing when they heard on the radio that broadcast that Sunday morning about the invasion.

Until September 2011, this was the deadliest attack on American soil. "December 7, 1941, a date that will live in infamy." Those were the words of President Franklin Roosevelt that became forever embedded in the minds of patriots across our land igniting and launching a nation into the fiery trenches of battle throughout the world.

Those of that Greatest Generation proved that when freedom of this Nation is threatened, our people will stand and fight. They will bring the thunder of God upon our enemies. Defending freedom and liberty was the battle cry of the sailors, marines, and soldiers that died 70 years ago at Pearl Harbor.

We remember December 7, 1941, and the Americans who stood tall and kept the flame of America burning brightly. They were a remarkable bunch of people. They were the Americans.

My friend, Petty Officer Luke Trahin, stayed in the United States Navy for 38 years, either on active or reserve status. He wore his uniform every Memorial Day, every Veterans Day, and spent a lot of time speaking proudly about this country. He died 4 years ago on December 5, 2007. He was 89 years of age.

And that's just the way it is.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXTENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the urgent need to extend unemployment insurance for struggling Americans. Forty-five percent of all unemployed workers—more than 6 million people—have been out of work for more than 6 months.

Karen, from Cleveland, was laid off in March. She was laid off from a law firm due to budget constraints. She is 62 years old and unable to find a job in this economy. Unemployment insurance is helping her to get by with just the basic necessities. It is allowing her to pay for expensive but necessary prescriptions. She is actively looking for work, but she is afraid that if her unemployment benefits are cut, she will lose her house. Karen's State unemployment benefits can run out at the end of December.

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If Congress fails to act to renew the Federal unemployment insurance program, she'll become just another statistic, one of the millions of Americans who identify themselves with the 99 percent. Karen, along with 6 million Americans, will be cut off from emergency lifeline saving resources unless Congress acts.

Sandra, of Cleveland Heights, lost her job in April 2011. It's her third lay-off. She is 59 years old. She never thought she would find herself in this position at this age.

Rather than defaulting on her mortgage, she has used up all of her retirement savings. Now she is deeper into debt. When her unemployment funds run out, it's likely she will default. And being an older worker, it makes it even harder.

We see this scenario all too often across this Nation, hardworking Americans getting laid off, using up their savings, and then losing their homes. We've seen foreclosure rates soar, and Americans are falling behind on their mortgage payments at a very rapid rate. In my district, more than 13 percent of homeowners are 90 or more days behind on their mortgage.

In 2010, unemployment benefits kept 3 million Americans, including nearly 1 million children, from falling into poverty. Extending unemployment insurance can prevent the loss of over 500,000 jobs, according to the Economic Policy Institute—500,000 jobs.

You know why? Because UI payments go directly into the economy. They support local businesses. They help create jobs and reduce the demand for public services. If we don't extend unemployment insurance, it would be the equivalent of pulling nearly \$90 billion out of the economy in 2012.

There's one more story I'd like to tell you. It's from Molly in Toledo. I tell Molly's story because it embodies the frustration felt by thousands upon

thousands of American across this country.

Molly has battled unemployment since October 2008. She wonders how the rich and powerful expect people like her to survive without good-paying jobs. "Are we just supposed to die," she asks? "Commit suicide? Starve to death while we are homeless and on the streets?"

Molly says: "The deck really seems to be stacked against ordinary Americans. No one with any real power seems to care, except Warren Buffett."

"I'm trying to find a good job," she says, "or any job for that matter. We, the unemployed are demonized by the right and discriminated against for being out of work. We're too old or overqualified or underqualified, or we're the wrong color. What has happened to my country?" she asks.

These are the stories of everyday Americans who are struggling to get by. This is not about Democrats and Republicans. This is about coming together to help millions of unemployed Americans get through the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. It's about helping our economy grow and about creating jobs.

Americans are frustrated with the decline of the middle class and the lack of good-paying jobs. But these honorable citizens haven't given up, and neither can we. We must act now. We must extend unemployment insurance.

WHY ARE WE STILL IN AFGHANISTAN?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, when we were home during the Thanksgiving break, like all my colleagues, I did as much as I could to be with the people of the Third District of North Carolina. The Third District is the home of Camp Lejeune Marine Base, Cherry Point Marine Air Station, and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, and over 60,000 retired veterans in the Third District.

Since coming back to Washington, I've done two town meetings by phone. What I heard while I was home during Thanksgiving and the two town meetings: Why are we still in Afghanistan?

When I hear my colleagues in both parties talking about the problems facing the American people—unemployment benefits, extending the tax cuts for middle class America—we all grapple with, both parties, how we are going to pay for it.

Well, there is a man in Afghanistan that is a crook and corrupt, who gets \$10 billion a month that he doesn't have to worry about. Poor Americans are out here doing the best they can in a very difficult economy, and we can't help them, but we can help a corrupt leader in Afghanistan. It makes no sense. I hope that this Congress will come together and say to the President, let's not wait till 2014.

How many more American boys and girls will have to die and give their legs in the next 3 years for a corrupt leader? I've asked the Department of Defense, and I wrote Secretary Panetta and asked him that question. Give me your projections of how many more young men and women will have to die and lose their legs. I hope that I get that response soon.

That brings me to the point of a young marine I saw at Walter Reed/Bethesda about 3 weeks ago. There were four marines from the Third District of North Carolina. Three have lost both legs, and the one that had lost only one leg, a corporal, mom sitting in the room, said to me, Sir, may I ask you a question? I said certainly you may. Why are we still in Afghanistan? And I looked at him and I said, I don't know why we're still there.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense. The American people and the people of the Third District of North Carolina are saying, we have won; bin Laden is dead; al Qaeda has been dispersed all over the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is time, as we debate these very difficult, complex issues for our Nation, that we get smart with our foreign policy. And smart means, let's don't try to police the world.

History has proven you will never change Afghanistan. It will never change, no matter what we do or any other country tries to do.

So, Mr. Speaker, beside me is a poster with a flag-draped coffin coming off the plane at Dover. And with humility I tell you today, Mr. Speaker, I've signed over 10,400 letters to families and extended families who've lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I thank God that He has allowed me to have a heart large enough to feel the pain of war, because I've never been to war. But when I sign those letters, I feel the pain of the families, and I lick every envelope that I send.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to close my comments by asking God to please bless our men and women in uniform, God to please bless the families who've lost loved ones fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. God, please bless the House and Senate that we will do what's right for the American people. Bless Mr. Obama that he will do what is right for the American people.

And three times I will say, God, please, God, please, God, please continue to bless America.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE EXTENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. ELLISON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, before I begin my remarks, I want to publicly associate myself with everything WALTER JONES just said. He is absolutely right.

Mr. Speaker, this holiday season Congress has chances, a couple of chances right in front of them to do